No, Nothing, Never

Janet K. Wallace

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This story was first published on October 18th, 2025, and was last updated on October 18th, 2025.

FicLab ID: PbJh3iO5/mk3c1dor/50000E5e1

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Summary

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title	No, Nothing, Never
author	Janet K. Wallace
source	https://www.fanfiction.net/s/14516861/
published	October 18th, 2025
updated	October 18th, 2025
words	1,329
chapters	1
status	Complete
rating	Fiction T
tags	Angst, Comfort, Complete, Fanfiction, Final Fantasy IX, Fratley, Freya C., Games, Hurt

Description:

In which Sir Fratley experiences a dissociative episode.

1. No, Nothing, Never

He wakes up as if the grave he were lying on had been violated by rays of sunlight.

He knows, with both eyes brimming with tears, that he will always be greeted by cloudy days.

He feels each of his teeth with the tongue in his mouth, but none of them seem to belong to him.

He rises out of bed with great effort, without bothering to make it right away.

He wraps bandages around his arms to hide scars he’s too unfamiliar with.

He wears clothing that functions as a second skin, one that is socially acceptable for being shown.

He carries a javelin whose weight he cannot bear, not without being reminded that he could.

He puts a hat on his head and tells himself that it belonged to his father.

He sticks a collar around his neck and says it belonged to his mother before she passed away.

He assumes that both of them would support the decision he made at that moment.

He hears his stomach growling for food, yet he ignores its cries, as he has more important matters to attend to than his own hunger.

He considers taking a shower, but decides to let the rain outside wash him clean and its scent hide his personal filth.

He believes that the scent of rain can conceal his personal cesspool of miseries, as has often been the case.

He opens the window of his bedroom, because it takes a lot of effort to just go downstairs.

He leaves home, leaving his bed unmade, his room messy, and his breakfast poorly served.

He walks away, as far as he can from his house, without looking back and not knowing whether he will return or not.

He feels the rain falling and sliding down his back, but that sensation no longer pleases him.

He thinks to himself that there is no reason to go back home, because war is approaching and it will destroy everything and everyone in its reach.

He rushes toward the main gates as fast as he can, leaping from one building to the next.

He speaks on his way to the kingdom’s entrance, but none of his words make any sense as he moves quicker than the thoughts he has in mind.

He notices that his muscles are working, and he is grateful to know that his years of training as a Dragoon have been beneficial in keeping him in shape.

He reflects and attempts to find an answer to the foolishness he is about to commit.

He argues that a single man is capable of facing an entire army and, as always, he strongly stands by what he says, even if others tend to ignore him.

He curses something, but those words seem too intense, too inappropriate for a respected knight like him.

He follows his path, having no worries about the size of the army he will face alone.

He refuses to acknowledge the people who look at him with a certain contempt and hurt that he is oblivious to.

He hears a child make a comment that sounded like an insult, something like “Are you going to fight another windmill again, old fart?”, but he dismisses it once he arrives at the main gates.

He breathes, but feels no relief, since all he feels is pain and numbness throughout the whole body.

He hesitates to take a step forward, and hesitates once more as he looks around him, at what is behind and in front of him, which leads him to gaze at the empty fields lying outside the gates.

He shivers when he figures out that the army he was expecting is not there, and never was.

He then realizes that the war he so desperately wanted to prevent happened long ago.

He tries to avoid reminiscing about all those unspeakable acts of violence that led to the defeat of his nation, and its people.

He stares at the ruins of what was once Burmecia, afraid of speaking his own name, given he doesn’t belong here anymore.

He cries when he learns that many people died, including a portion of himself.

He blames himself for leaving Burmecia and not helping his people when they needed him most.

He holds himself solely responsible for the crime of letting all of those people die.

He wishes he could have been the greatest hero of all, the sacrifice, one who would be willing to take away his own life in order to save millions.

He nurtures high expectations, but is ultimately brought back down to Gaia, knocked over like an insignificant and meaningless vase.

Disappointed, he crouches down, barely able to stand as the rain hits him like a barrage of bullets.

Enraged, he throws his javelin away, takes off his hat, tears his clothes as if they were made of nothing and rips off his collar so hard that it breaks and injures one of his hands.

Furious, he remains still, not bothered by the blood dripping out of his hands or his lack of decency.

Dissatisfied, he curls up in a corner, unaware of the passing of time, not caring that he is naked because nothing in the world can hurt him if it has already hurt him enough.

His name is Sir Fratley. He is the master of deceit, one who fools himself at believing he can exist beyond the past tense.

He has trouble understanding that the life he values so much is so easily taken away, and at the same time, so difficult to be removed.

This is not the first time this has happened. He knows.

He had already woken up many days before, proclaiming himself to be the hero of the Burmecia people when they had already lost faith in him.

All of them.

But when he was convinced that everyone had abandoned him, she approached.

She hands him a blanket, which he wraps himself in.

She says she saw him leave his house early in the morning and has been trying to look for him all afternoon.

She apologizes for being occupied on duty, and he appears to pay no attention to her words.

She states, with a voice hoarse as if with passion, that she is concerned about his health, much to her own detriment.

To Freya Crescent, this has become routine. She knows Fratley has been acting strangely lately, as if he might fall apart at any moment.

She has grown weary of the burden of caring for him.

He has grown tired of being given enough care he does not deserve.

She extends one hand to him, which he takes, but neither of them feel any touch.

He complains, during his way home in the evening, that he does not want such kindness out of her, and explains that the man she loved no longer exists, and all she sees is a phony, a fraud, a dead ringer wearing an all too familiar mask.

He utters, as he walks upstairs, that the Sir Fratley she knew before doesn’t exist anymore. Instead, the one who took his place pretends to give himself some meaning to his otherwise empty life.

He weeps, as he collapses near bed, when he tells Freya that she wound up in a relationship with a

flawed man, more out of obligation rather than out of genuine concern for his well-being.

He strokes her hair and crushes her heart, as she kisses him in the forehead, once he mentions that the real man of her life was not given the chance to be mourned with the proper respect he deserves, and that he is ashamed of who he is, where he lives, how he come to be…

And with all of that said, she falls asleep on his chest, but not before promising that things will change for the better, and he tries to believe her more than he can ever believe himself.

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